



PREPARING

for the
California
High School
Exit Examination

An English-Language Arts Study Guide

Prepared by the
California Department of Education
Sacramento, 2004

Preparing for the
California High School
Exit Examination

**An English–Language
Arts Study Guide**



Publishing Information

*Preparing for the California High School Exit Examination:
An English–Language Arts Study Guide*

© 2004 California Department of Education. Reprinted 2005.

Permission is granted in advance for reproduction of this document for educational purposes only. The content must remain unchanged and in its entirety as published by the California Department of Education (CDE). To request permission to reproduce the information (text or graphics) contained in this document for resale, submit the specifics of your request in writing to the Copyright Program Office, California Department of Education, CDE Press, 1430 N Street, Suite 3207, Sacramento, CA 95814. Fax: (916) 324-9787.

Please note that any privately copyrighted reading passages contained in any CDE materials or on the CDE Web site may not be reproduced in publications for sale or otherwise. To obtain permission and terms of use for privately copyrighted materials, contact the copyright holder.

This printing of the *English–Language Arts Study Guide* contains the following privately copyrighted passages:

The Courage That My Mother Had by Edna St. Vincent Millay

“A Day Away,” from *Wouldn’t Take Nothing for My Journey Now*,
by Maya Angelou

Photo Credits

All images originated from Photodisc Royalty Free CD, Digital Vision Royalty Free CD, and Images 100 Royalty Free CD.



CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

1430 N STREET
SACRAMENTO, CA
95814-5901

JACK O'CONNELL

State Superintendent of
Public Instruction

PHONE: (916) 319-0800

A MESSAGE TO STUDENTS AND PARENTS

In 1999, California enacted a law requiring that every California public school student pass an examination to receive a high school diploma. The exam's purpose is to ensure that high school graduates can use mathematics and read and write in English competently. In July 2003, the California State Board of Education decided that the Class of 2006, who were tenth graders in 2003–04, will be the first students required to pass the *California High School Exit Examination* (CAHSEE) to receive a diploma. We realize that many students and their families find the prospect of taking this test stressful. Therefore, we are pleased to be able to provide students and their parents with this *English-Language Arts Study Guide*, which is designed to help students prepare for and pass the CAHSEE.

The CAHSEE will be administered over two days. On the first day, students will take the English-language arts portion of the test; on the second day, they will take the mathematics portion. All of the questions on the CAHSEE are based on California's academic content standards in English-language arts and mathematics. These standards outline what students are expected to know and be able to do by the end of each school year from kindergarten through high school.

The focus of this study guide is the English-language arts part of the exam. It includes questions from previous CAHSEEs and explains how to determine the correct answers; it gives studying and test-taking tips; and it answers frequently asked questions. A similar study guide for mathematics is also available.

Passing the CAHSEE is an achievement for students, and we hope you find this guide helpful. If you have questions or would like more information about the CAHSEE, please contact your high school's principal or your school district's testing office. The California Department of Education's CAHSEE Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/hs> is also an excellent resource.

Good luck with this exam!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jack O'Connell". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.



CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

1430 N STREET
SACRAMENTO, CA
95814-5901

JACK O'CONNELL

State Superintendent of
Public Instruction

PHONE: (916) 319-0800

UN MENSAJE A LOS ALUMNOS Y SUS PADRES O GUARDIANES

En 1999, el estado de California pasó una ley que exige que todo alumno de una escuela pública de California apruebe un examen para recibir su diploma de preparatoria o high school. El propósito del examen es el de asegurar que los alumnos que se gradúen de la preparatoria o high school puedan leer y escribir en inglés y puedan usar las matemáticas. En Julio del 2003, la Junta Directiva de Educación del Estado decidió que la clase del 2006, los alumnos que estuvieron en décimo grado en el año escolar 2003–04, serán los primeros a quienes se les exigirá pasar el examen *California High School Exit Exam*—también conocido como CAHSEE por sus siglas en inglés—para recibir su diploma de preparatoria o high school. Nosotros estamos concientes de que el tener que tomar este examen es una fuente de tensión para los alumnos y sus familias. Por eso nos complace proveer a los alumnos y sus padres o guardianes con esta *Guía de Estudio de Inglés o English-Language Arts*, la cual esta diseñada para ayudar a los alumnos a prepararse para pasar el CAHSEE.

El CAHSEE se administra durante dos días. El primer día los alumnos tomarán la sección que se enfoca en los conocimientos de inglés o English-language arts. Durante el segundo día los alumnos tomarán la sección del examen que se enfoca en las matemáticas. Todas las preguntas del CAHSEE están basadas en los estándares estatales del contenido de inglés o English-language arts y de matemáticas. Estos estándares describen lo que se espera que los alumnos sepan y puedan hacer al final de cada año escolar desde el kinder hasta el 12° grado.

Esta guía de estudio se enfoca en la sección del examen que cubre los conocimientos **de inglés o English-language arts**. Incluye preguntas de exámenes previos y provee ayuda para determinar cual es la mejor respuesta; presenta estrategias para estudiar y para responder a preguntas; y responde a las preguntas más frecuentes acerca del examen. Existe una guía similar para la parte del examen que se concentra en matemáticas.

Pasar el CAHSEE es un gran logro para los alumnos y esperamos que esta guía les ayude. Si tiene preguntas o le gustaría obtener más información acerca del examen por favor llame al director de su escuela o a la oficina de evaluación de su distrito escolar. La página de Web del CAHSEE del Departamento de Educación de California también es un recurso excelente. Visítela en: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/hs>.

¡Buena suerte con este examen!

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Much appreciation goes to the educators who contributed to the development of material provided in this study guide.

Principal Author

Jane Hancock, Co-Director
California Writing Project, UCLA

Editor

Carol Jago, Co-Director
California Reading and Literature Project, UCLA
Teacher, Santa Monica High School
Santa Monica High School District

University of California Office of the President

Elizabeth Stage, Director
Mathematics and Science
Professional Development

Harold Asturias, Deputy Director
Mathematics and Science
Professional Development

Susan Arnold, Assistant to the Director
Mathematics and Science
Professional Development

Advisory Panel

Karen Lopez, Teacher
William S. Hart High School
William S. Hart Union School District

Sidnie Myrick, Associate Director
California Writing Project, UCLA

Cynthia Oei, Teacher
Herbert Hoover High School
Glendale Unified School District

Tylene F. Quizon
Robert A. Millikan High School
Long Beach Unified School District

Anne Gani Sirota, Co-Director
California Reading and Literature Project, UCLA

Joyce Tamanaha-Ho, Teacher
Alhambra High School
Alhambra Unified School District

California Department of Education

Geno Flores, Deputy Superintendent
Assessment and Accountability Branch

Deb Sigman, Director
Standards and Assessment Division

Phil Spears, Former Director
Standards and Assessment Division

Lily Roberts, Administrator
CAHSEE Office

Janet Chladek, Former Administrator
CAHSEE Office

Terry Emmett, Administrator
Reading/Language Arts Leadership Office

Jessica Valdez, Consultant
CAHSEE Office

Bruce Little, Consultant
CAHSEE Office

Beth Breneman, Consultant
Reading/Language Arts Leadership Office

Paul Michelson, Consultant
Testing and Reporting Office

Other Contributors

Meg Holmberg, Writing Consultant
EEPS Media

Tim Erickson, Writing Consultant
EEPS Media

CONTENTS

Frequently Asked Questions 1

Preguntas Hechas Frecuentemente 3

Information for Students 7

How This Study Guide Can Help You 7

Tips for Studying 7

General Tips for Multiple-Choice Questions 8

Specific Tips for English-Language Arts Questions 9

Tips for Writing an Essay 10

Tips for Using the Answer Sheet 10

What You Need to Know 10

Word Analysis Strand 13

Discovering Meaning 15

Working with Imagery 18

Vocabulary 20

Reading Comprehension Strand 23

Main Idea 25

Author's Purpose and Tone 30

Building Everyday Skills 36

Literary Response and Analysis Strand 39

Fiction, Relationships, and Characters 41

Poetry and Theme 46

Writing Strategies Strand 49

Finding and Correcting Errors 51

Choosing Better Words and Phrases 54

Writing Conventions Strand 59

Tense, Placement, and Punctuation 61

Proper Case and Rules to Remember 65

Writing Applications Strand 69

Biographical Essays 72

Responses to Literature 73

Exposition 80

Persuasive Essays 84

Business Letters 87

Appendix 89

English-Language Arts Practice Test 91

Released Student Responses and

Scoring Guides for Writing Tasks 119

Preparing for the
California High School
Exit Examination

**An English–Language
Arts Study Guide**

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The following questions are often asked about the California High School Exit Examination (CAHSEE). If you have a question that is not answered here, call your high school's principal or your school district's testing office. You can find answers to other frequently asked questions on CDE's CAHSEE Web site, <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/hs>.

What does the CAHSEE cover?

The CAHSEE has two parts: English-language arts and mathematics.

The English-language arts part of the CAHSEE tests state content standards through grade ten. The reading section includes vocabulary, decoding, comprehension, and analysis of informational and literary texts. The writing section covers writing strategies, applications, and the conventions of standard English (for example, grammar, spelling, and punctuation).

The mathematics part of the CAHSEE tests state content standards in grades six and seven and Algebra I. The exam includes statistics, data analysis and probability, number sense, measurement and geometry, mathematical reasoning, and algebra. Students are also asked to demonstrate a strong foundation in computation and arithmetic, including working with decimals, fractions, and percentages.

What kinds of questions are on the CAHSEE?

Most of the questions on the CAHSEE are multiple choice. However, the English-language arts part of the exam also includes one essay question (writing task). The exam is given only in English, and all students must pass the exam in English to receive a high school diploma. Released questions from previous administrations of the CAHSEE can be found throughout this guide and on CDE's Web site.

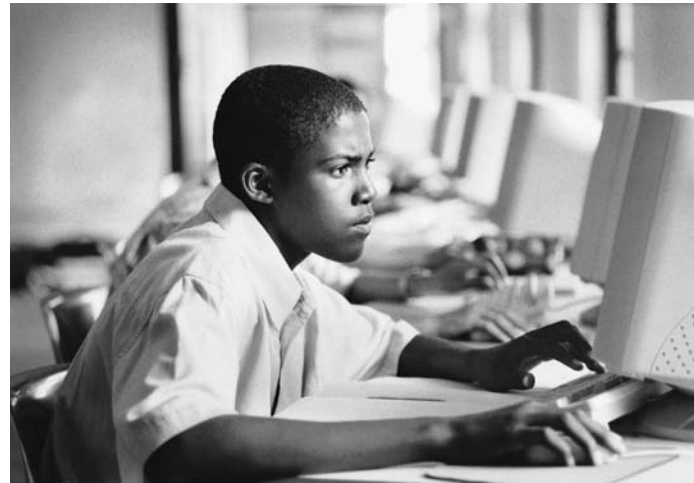
When do students first take the CAHSEE?

Students must take the exam for the first time in the second part of their tenth grade year.

When (and how) do students find out whether they have passed the CAHSEE?

School districts receive student score reports about two months after the date of the exam. One copy is to be mailed to the student's home and another copy is to be kept in the

student's permanent record. It is important that parents or guardians keep a copy of the student report for their records. The State of California does *not* keep a copy of the scores. All individual student scores are confidential. Only group scores (for entire schools and districts) are made public. Scores may range from 275 to 450. A passing score is 350 or higher.



2 Frequently Asked Questions

What if a student does not pass the first time?

Students who do not pass the exam in the tenth grade will have several opportunities to take it again during their junior and senior years. Once they have passed either part of the exam, they will not be tested again on that part. By state law, students who do not pass a part of the exam must be offered extra instruction to learn what they need to know in order to pass. It is up to each school and district to decide how to provide this instruction. To find out what type of help is available and when the exam will be given again at your school, contact the principal or a counselor at your high school.

What if a student has special needs?

If a student has an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or a Section 504 Plan, it should describe any special arrangements the student is entitled to while taking an exam. Special arrangements for taking the CAHSEE are categorized as either “accommodations” or “modifications.” It is important to understand the difference between them because it may affect a student’s score on the exam.

An **accommodation** does not alter what the test measures—for example, taking extra breaks during the exam or using a test booklet with large print.

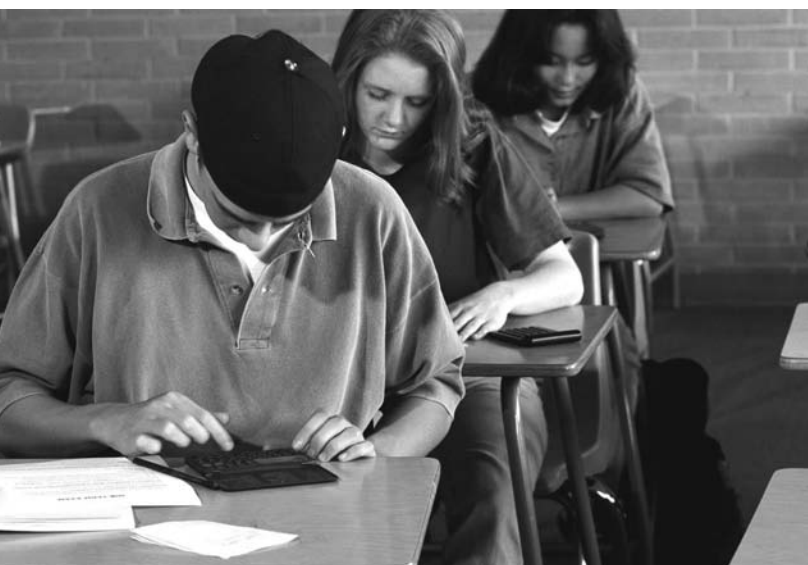
A **modification** fundamentally alters what the exam measures—for example, using a calculator on the mathematics part of the exam, or hearing an audio presentation of the questions on the ELA part of the exam.

Students must be permitted to use any accommodations or modifications on the CAHSEE that are specified for testing purposes in their IEP or Section 504 Plan. Students who take the exam using an *accommodation* receive a score just as any other student does. However, students who use a *modification* receive a numeric score followed by the words “NOT VALID.” If the student receives a score of 350 or higher, the student’s principal must request a waiver from the local school board at the parent’s or guardian’s request. This is done, in part, by presenting evidence to the local board proving that the student has gained the knowledge and skills otherwise needed to pass the CAHSEE.

More information about the procedure for requesting a waiver, including a list of modifications and accommodations, can be accessed on CDE’s CAHSEE Web site or by talking with a high school principal.

What if a student is still learning to speak and read in English?

All students must pass the CAHSEE to be eligible for a high school diploma. Students who are English learners are required to take the CAHSEE in grade ten with all students. However, the law says that during their first 24 months in a California school, they are to receive six months of special instruction in reading, writing, and comprehension in English. A student who does not pass the exam in grade ten will have additional opportunities to pass it.



PREGUNTAS HECHAS FRECUENTEMENTE

A continuación encontrará respuestas a las preguntas más frecuentes sobre el Examen *California High School Exit Examination* o CAHSEE. Si tiene preguntas cuyas respuestas no aparezcan aquí, por favor llame al director de su escuela o a la oficina de evaluación de su distrito escolar. Puede encontrar respuestas a otras preguntas frecuentes en la página de Web del Departamento de Educación de California o CDE y del CAHSEE <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/hs>.

¿Qué cubre el CAHSEE?

El CAHSEE tiene dos secciones: inglés y matemáticas.

La sección de inglés del CAHSEE cubre los estándares estatales del contenido abarcando hasta el décimo grado inclusive. La parte correspondiente a la lectura incluye vocabulario, decodificación, comprensión y análisis de textos de información y textos de literatura. En la parte de escritura, el examen cubre estrategias de la escritura, aplicaciones y las reglas del inglés (por ejemplo gramática, ortografía y puntuación).

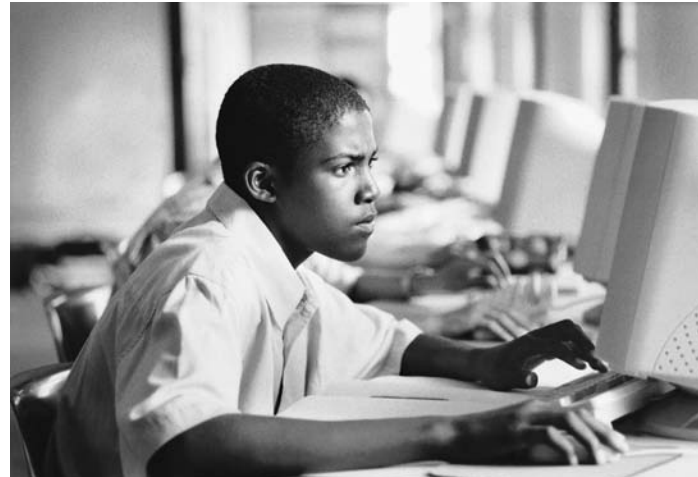
La parte de matemáticas del CAHSEE cubre los estándares estatales del sexto y séptimo grado y álgebra I. El examen incluye estadística, análisis de datos y probabilidad, teoría de los números, medidas y geometría, razonamiento matemático y álgebra. Se espera que los alumnos demuestren tener destreza en cómputo y aritmética, incluyendo la habilidad de trabajar con decimales, fracciones y porcentajes.

¿Qué clase de preguntas contiene el CAHSEE?

La mayor parte de las preguntas en el CAHSEE son preguntas de selección múltiple. Sin embargo, la sección de inglés también incluye una pregunta en forma de ensayo (*writing task*). El examen se administra en inglés solamente y todos los alumnos deben aprobarlo en inglés para recibir su diploma de preparatoria o *high school*. En esta guía de estudio y en la página de web del Departamento de Educación de California o CDE, hay ejemplos de preguntas que han aparecido en exámenes previos.

¿Cuándo toman los alumnos el CAHSEE por primera vez?

Los alumnos deberán tomar el examen por primera vez en la segunda parte de su décimo grado.



¿Cuándo (y cómo) sabrán los alumnos si aprobaron o no el CAHSEE?

Los distritos escolares reciben los reportes de las calificaciones obtenidas por sus alumnos aproximadamente dos meses después de haber administrado el examen. Una copia se envía directamente a la casa del alumno y otra copia se archiva con el

4 Preguntas Hechas Frecuentemente

expediente permanente del alumno. Es importante que los padres o guardianes guarden una copia del reporte del alumno para sus archivos. El estado de California *no* retiene ninguna copia de los resultados. Los resultados de cada alumno son confidenciales. Se publican solamente resultados de grupos (de escuelas enteras y distritos). Las calificaciones varían entre los 275 a los 450 puntos. Se requiere una calificación de 350 o más para aprobar.

¿Qué pasa si un alumno no aprueba la primera vez?

Los alumnos que no aprueben el examen en el décimo grado tendrán varias oportunidades de tomarlo de nuevo durante el 11º y el 12º grado. Una vez que hayan aprobado una de las dos secciones del examen no tendrán que tomar esa parte de nuevo. La ley estatal exige que los alumnos que no aprueben alguna parte del examen reciban educación adicional que les ayude a aprender lo que necesitan saber para aprobarlo. Cada escuela y cada distrito decidirá cómo proveer esa educación adicional. Para saber que tipo de ayuda hay disponible en la escuela de su hijo o hija y cuando el examen será administrado de nuevo, llame al director o al consejero de la escuela.

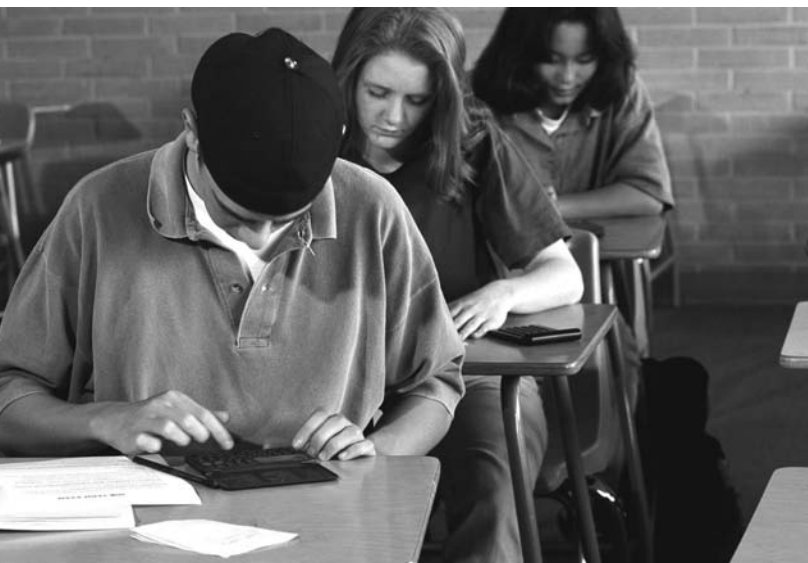
¿Qué pasa si un alumno tiene necesidades especiales?

Si un alumno tiene un Programa de Estudios Individualizado o *Individualized Education Program*—también conocido como IEP por sus siglas en inglés o un Plan de Sección 504, estos deberán describir los arreglos especiales a los que el alumno tiene derecho al tomar el examen.

Las dos clases de arreglos especiales para tomar el CAHSEE son “adaptaciones” y “modificaciones”. Es importante entender la diferencia entre estas dos clases de arreglos porque pueden afectar la calificación que el alumno obtenga en el examen.

Una **adaptación** no altera lo que el examen evalúa—por ejemplo, tomar descansos adicionales durante el examen o usar un cuadernillo de examen con letras grandes.

Una **modificación** cambia fundamentalmente lo que el examen está evaluando—por ejemplo, usar una calculadora en la parte de matemáticas o escuchar una grabación de las preguntas en la sección de inglés.



Los alumnos tienen derecho a cualquier adaptación o modificación para tomar el CAHSEE que haya sido estipulada en su programa de IEP o plan de Sección 504. Los alumnos que tomen el examen usando una *adaptación* recibirán una calificación como todos los demás. Sin embargo, los alumnos que usen una *modificación* recibirán su calificación numérica seguida de las palabras “NOT VALID” (NO VÁLIDA). Sin embargo, si el alumno obtiene 350 puntos o más, el director de la escuela del alumno debe pedir a petición de los padres o guardianes una exención o *waiver* a la junta escolar de su localidad. Este proceso lleva a cabo, en parte, con una presentación para la junta escolar de su localidad, demostrando



pruebas que el alumno ha adquirido los conocimientos y las destrezas necesarias que de otra manera sean necesarias para aprobar el CAHSEE.

Puede encontrar más información acerca del proceso para pedir esta exención o waiver incluyendo una lista de posibles adaptaciones y modificaciones en la página de Web del Departamento de Educación de California o hablando con el director de su escuela.

¿Qué pasa si un alumno todavía está aprendiendo a hablar y leer inglés?

Todos los alumnos deben pasar el CAHSEE para obtener su diploma de preparatoria o *high school*. Los alumnos que están aprendiendo inglés o *English learners* tienen que tomar el CAHSEE en el décimo grado como todos los demás. Sin embargo, la ley exige que durante sus primeros 24 meses en una escuela de California deberán recibir seis meses de educación especializada en lectura, escritura y comprensión del inglés. Todo alumno que no apruebe el examen tendrá otras oportunidades para hacerlo.

INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS

This section of the study guide has been written just for you. To receive a high school diploma, you must pass the CAHSEE, and we want to make sure that you do. Although you will have several opportunities throughout high school to take the CAHSEE, wouldn't it be great if you could pass it the next time you take it?

How This Study Guide Can Help You

First we offer some studying and test-taking tips. The English-language arts part of the CAHSEE consists mainly of multiple-choice questions, but it also contains one writing task. The writing task will ask you to write an essay. This study guide includes tips for answering multiple-choice questions and writing tasks. During the exam, if you're confused by a question or you're not completely certain of the answer, remembering these tips can help you decide what to do.

Next, we describe what you need to know for the exam and why it's important to know it. We provide released questions from previous CAHSEE administrations and go step-by-step to find the correct answers. Although we cannot use questions that will appear on the actual test you will take, we believe these released questions and explanations should help you succeed on the real test.

Tips for Studying

- **Start early to prepare**

Don't wait until the last minute to read this study guide. Find a place where it's easy to concentrate, and set aside some time each week to prepare. Starting early will ensure you have time to get help if you have questions.



- **Don't go it alone!**

If you have trouble understanding any part of this guide, get help! Share it with a teacher, a counselor, your parents, or guardian. Ask them to look it over with you. You also can gather a group of students and work through the guide together.

If you have already taken the CAHSEE, your score report will show which parts of the English-language arts exam gave you trouble. When you get help, take the score report with you so the person helping you can concentrate on the topics that challenge you the most.

By California law, your school district must offer special instruction to students who have not passed the exam. To find out what your school offers, ask your English teacher or principal.

- **Read for fun!**

Sometimes students get so caught up in getting ready for a test that they stop reading. That's unfortunate because, over the long run, reading for pleasure is one of the best ways to prepare. Some researchers say that students who read a lot also improve their writing, grammar, spelling, and vocabulary. So every chance you get, read and write for your own enjoyment. Talk to others about the books



you read. Keep a journal or write letters to friends. This isn't only about succeeding on a test or in your English class. This is about enriching your life!

Now for those test-taking tips . . .



General Tips for Multiple-Choice Questions

The English-language arts part of the CAHSEE includes 79 multiple-choice questions (72 that are scored, plus another 7 that the test-makers are trying out for future use.) Here are some general tips that will help you use your time well on multiple-choice questions.

- **It's okay if you don't know the answer to every question.**

You don't have to get every question right to pass the exam. If you don't do well on one part of the English-language arts exam, you can make up for it on another part because there is just one score for English-language arts. Also, if you need extra time, you can keep working through the school day. (Just tell the person administering the exam that you need more time.) And, of course, if you don't pass, you'll have chances to take the exam again. So, if you find yourself becoming anxious, take a deep breath, relax, and focus on doing the best you can.

- **Answer easy questions first.**

If a passage or question gives you trouble, skip it and focus on the ones that you understand. In your test booklet, mark the ones you skip. (It's okay to write in the CAHSEE test booklet.) Then, if you have time, return to the questions you skipped.

- **Eliminate answers you know are wrong.**

If you're not certain of the answer to a question, cross out any choices you *know* are wrong. (Do this in the test booklet—*not* on the answer sheet.) That way when you return to the question, you'll have a record of what you have already figured out.

- **If you're still not sure of the answer, guess.**

Unlike other multiple-choice tests you might have taken, the CAHSEE does *not* subtract points for wrong answers. It is to your advantage to answer *every* question. If you can eliminate just two out of the four choices in any question, you have a 50-50 chance of being right. And even if you have no idea about the answer, you have a one-out-of-four chance of getting it right! Before you turn in your answer form, make certain you've responded to each question.

- **Check your work.**

When you finish the last question, go back over the exam to review your thinking and to check for any careless mistakes. **Remember that you can ask for more time if you need it.**



Specific Tips for English-Language Arts Questions

On the English-language arts part of the CAHSEE, many of the multiple-choice questions follow a reading passage. **If you have trouble with reading the passage, don't give up!** Sometimes students who have difficulty with reading become discouraged when they see pages of text. However, if you look at the questions that follow the passage *before* you begin to read it may help you to find the answers as you go through the passage. You will still have to use reading skills—but they may be different skills from those you would use for a reading assignment in school.

Here are some strategies to try:

- **Skim the question for key words. Then look for them in the passage.**
“Key words” are the important words in the question—words that might lead you to the information you are being asked to find. Read the question quickly to find the key words. When you find one, underline it in your test booklet.

Once you have found a key word in the question, see if you can find it in the passage. When you find a key word, read the sentence in which it appears. Does it answer the question? If not, try reading the entire paragraph.

- **Make connections to your own life and experience.**
For some questions, the answer is not in the text because the author wants you to interpret the situation and draw your own conclusions. (This is called “reading for inference.”) To do this, it often helps to make connections to your own knowledge and experiences. For example, if a question asks why someone did something, think about why you would do the same thing. Then see if your reasons match any that are given in the answer choices.
- **Take advantage of questions that include text taken from the passage.**
Many questions require that you read only the part of the text that is given to you along with the question. Questions like this often begin: “Read this sentence from the passage.”
- **Pay special attention to questions about vocabulary words and literary terms.**
Some questions, rather than testing your reading skills, are checking whether you understand a vocabulary word or a literary term such as *simile*, *irony*, or *figurative language*. If you know what the word or term means, you don't necessarily have to read the whole passage to answer the question.

These strategies won't work for every question, but they may help you answer many questions quickly. This will give you more time to spend on questions that require you to read the entire passage—for example, when you are asked to identify the “main idea.” Finally, these are strategies that “expert” readers use on a daily basis. Practicing these reading strategies will help you, too, become an expert reader or reinforce the skills you already have.

Tips for Writing an Essay

You will be asked to write an essay for the English-language arts part of the CAHSEE. To do your best work, it will help to keep in mind a few simple guidelines.

- **Read the writing task carefully and note the key words.**
Sometimes when people are anxious about an exam, they jump in too quickly, misread the question, and end up writing about the wrong topic. Before you begin, take the time to be sure you understand what you are being asked to write about.
- **Plan before you write.**
In your test booklet, you can make a list or an outline. Or you can construct a cluster or a grid. The study guide will show you how grids work in writing various types of essays. A plan will help you stay focused on your task and on the topic.



- **Begin and end strong.**
The beginning and end of your essay are likely to have the greatest impact on the reader. Pay special attention to your first and last paragraphs.
- **Take your time.**
Because the test scorers are not interested in how fast you can write, they have allowed you plenty of time to

complete your essay. Don't feel you have to rush. If you finish early, use the extra time to read over and edit your essay.

Tips for Using the Answer Sheet

- Be careful not to make extra marks on the answer sheet. The machine that scores the exam can't tell them apart from your answers.
- Use only a #2 pencil.
- Mark only one answer to each question. If you change an answer, erase the original answer completely.
- Check now and then to make certain you're in the right place on the answer sheet. That way you'll know if you've accidentally skipped a line.



What You Need to Know

The CAHSEE is based on academic content standards set by the State of California. These standards highlight what a student should know and be able to do by the end of each grade in each subject area. The English-language arts part of the CAHSEE uses the standards through grade ten. As you use this study guide, you will find that we explain the standards in “user friendly” language.

The standards are grouped into “strands”—topics that weave through the curriculum from kindergarten through grade twelve, becoming more complex each year. The English-language arts part of the CAHSEE covers six strands. Below is a brief description of each strand and the number of questions on the CAHSEE that relate to it.

- **Word Analysis (WA)**
Students apply their knowledge of word origins to determine the meaning of new words encountered in reading materials and to use those words accurately. (7 multiple-choice questions)

- **Reading Comprehension (RC)**
Students read and understand a wide variety of classic and contemporary literature, magazines, newspapers, and online information. Students analyze the organizational patterns, arguments, and positions advanced. (18 multiple-choice questions)
- **Literary Response and Analysis (LR)**
Students read and respond to historically or culturally significant works of literature that reflect and enhance their studies of history and social science. Students conduct in-depth analyses of recurrent patterns and themes. (20 multiple-choice questions)
- **Writing Strategies (WS)**
Students write clear, coherent, and focused essays. The writing exhibits students' awareness of audience and purpose. Essays contain formal introductions, supporting evidence, and conclusions. (12 multiple-choice questions)
- **Writing Conventions (WC)**
Students write and speak with a command of standard English language conventions including grammar, sentence construction, and paragraph structure. (15 multiple-choice questions)
- **Writing Applications (AP)**
Students write one essay. The essay will be a response to one of the following: a literary or expository passage, a biographical narrative, a persuasive essay, or a business letter. (1 essay)

In the pages that follow, you will find a section on each strand where you will be able to practice with released test questions. Let's get started!